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Few WORDS

Concerning the

FAST

Which God requires.

The Antiquity, Necessity  
and Universality of it.

*John Writing his Book 1680*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for Ben. Clarke, in George-  
Yard, Lombard-street, 1680.

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FAST

Which God requires

The Anniversary of the  
and the

LONDON

Printed for Ben. Clark, in George-  
Town, Lombard-street, 1680.



*A few Words concerning the Fast which  
God requires : The Antiquity, Necess-  
sity and Universality of it.*

**F**irst, God commanded mankind, (or our first parents) who were made Perfect, Holy, Upright, Innocent in his own Image and Likeness; to Fast, or abstain from eating the forbidden fruit: And while mankind kept this Fast, God was well pleased with him, and he kept his state and dwelling place in Paradise, enjoying the Light of Gods countenance; no Guilt, no Shame, no Fear, the effects of sin was in being; the whole Creation was in their heavenly and earthly order, without Rent, Schisme or Jar: All was good, yea very good.

Now when mankind broke this *Fast*, and eat that which God forbid him; which was good in it self, though not for food, this let in all the Guilt, Fear, Shame, Perplexity of Mind, Confusion, Distress and Misery, that hath ever since attended mankind in this estate, even to this our Day, Age and Generation, among the whole bulk of mankind, of what Name, Nation, Opinion, Sect, Sort or Fashion of Religion soever they be off: If they are found Eating the forbidden fruit; breaking the command of God, not keeping the Fast that God required

and requireth, let their Form and Worship be what it will, such cannot find acceptance ; in the day they eat they die : As to God ; and they find that saying true, *When sin is finished it brings forth death.*

Now all evil thinking , evil speaking , and evil doing ; all Envy and Hatred, Plots and Conspiracies to Murther and Destroy one another, received its life and beginning in man, when he broke the Fast God commanded him to keep, and will continue and remain until the Fast be kept again, until man comes to live in obedience to the command of God : *To cease from evil, and learn to do well ; to do that he should do, and leave undone that he should not do.* And this I testifie from certain knowledge and experience, that this is the Fast which God requires : And that it is possible, mankind, through walking in the Light and Learning of the Grace and Spirit of God, may come into such estate while on this side the grave ; as to be able to keep this Fast, which God is well pleased with : And is indeed the Fast which was pointed at , and Typified forth by all the appointed Fasts under the Shadows, Dispensation of the Law ; Testified of by the Prophets, enjoyed and witnessed by the primitive Christians : Which Fast did not consist in forbearing to eat outward Food , and to cease from outward Labour , or in hanging down the Head , and walking Mourn-

*God Almighty Bless  
the Intentions and  
Endeavours of this  
present Parliament,  
in order to this  
work , and Crown  
them with Success.*

Mournfully for a time, or day , or in Reading over Prayers, &c.

But in short, *To loose the Bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy Burthens ; let the oppressed go free : Break every evil yoke, give bread to the hungry, bring the poor into the house, cover the naked, execute true judgment, shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother ; Oppress not the Widow, Fatherless, Stranger and Poor ; And let none imagine evil against his Brother or Neighbour :* This is the Fast the Lord did declare to be his choice in the Prophets time, and his choice is the same at this day : And this Fast is agreeable to the dispensation of Christ, or Gospel days we now live in ; being indeed the substance of the Doctrine of Christ, and the blessed end of his Coming, and glorious appearance in and among mankind, *To make an end of sin ;* And to mortifie the appetite, desire or hunger that sprang up, and springs up in mankind after the forbidden fruit ; the which being given way unto, led and leadeth into the breaking that Fast which God commanded and commandeth to be kept. *And to bring in everlasting righteousness ;* destroy the Devil and all his works, and restore , and redeem mankind into the Image of God again ; into Purity, Uprightness, Holiness, Justice, Righteousness, Equity and Mercy, Love and good Will to all mankind : Those that are here are in the Image of God, and are keeping the Fast which God

Isa. 18. Zech.  
7. from the 5 v.  
to 10. Mat. 6.  
16, 17, 18. ver.

commanded, and his Soul delights in: And in this state men are friends to God and friends to their Neighbour, and Love and good Will abounds in each man to his Neighbour and Brother, though he may differ in his understanding about spiritual things, and in the Manner and Form of his Worship. For let all men take this for an infallible sign, that if they find Envy and Anger arise in them against their Neighbour and Brother about Religion, Worship and Sacrifice, that they are of the spirit of *Cain*, that Religious Murtherer, who slew his Brother, because he was more Righteous, and his Sacrifice more accepted then his: Oh that none professing Christianity might be found in this state.

For it is inconsistent with the Spirit and Nature thereof, (though not with the Name and Form) to Hate, Envy and Persecute about Religion, Church and Worship, to Inquisition and torture mens Bodies, ruine and destroy their Estates in this World, about the things of the World to come, (or the Belief or Opinion of them) who are found in this work, know not what Spirit they are of; neither know they how to keep a Fast to God, nor offer a Sacrifice acceptable in his sight; this is the word of Truth to all, let their Name, Form or Fashion of Worship and Religion be what it will.

It is the Duty of every Christian to Fast and Pray; to Sacrifice a Fast unto the Lord, *To abstain from every appearance of evil*, (not from  
out



outward Food, or from one sort of Food, and eat another, and call that a *Fast*) Fasting and Prayer God delights in, but Eating and Prayer, Sinning and Sacrificing, doing that which should not be done, and leaving that undone which should be done, his Soul hates : And because of these things his Judgments are near to be revealed in this Age, as in Ages past, against all outside, formal, hypocritical Professors of all sorts and sects who have good Words and fair Speeches in their Mouths, but foul Deeds and evil Doings are found in their Hearts and Hands. This is the great Sin of *Christendom*, which God will visit for.

And God hath opened the eyes of thousands and ten thousands in this Island, to see, in some measure, as he seeth, and to understand things aright ; and such are not, nor cannot be deceived with a Golden Cup, while the Wine of Fornication is in it.

In the time of ignorance ( it is written ) God winked, but now he hath opened his eye, and his mouth also, and calls to all men every where to Repent, and all such as walks in the light of the eye of God, and obeys his voice, they come to know and witness a returning into Paradise, into the favour of God, into innocency ; uprightness and true holiness again, which mankind lost by eating the forbidden Fruit, which God commanded and commandeth to abstain or fast from ; and these are the people that are in a capacity to keep a *Fast* well-pleasing to God :

And this is the blessed end of God in speaking to our Fathers, to *Moses*, to the Prophets, and last of all by his only Son, even that mankind might come to keep the blessed *Fast* which God ordained in Paradise; and that he might no more hunger and thirst after the forbidden Fruit, but after Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the holy Spirit, in which stands that Kingdom, the increase thereof hath no end (he that can receive it, let him;) for short of this, all sorts of Profession and Religion is vain.

And among these people, the fruits and effects of keeping the *Fast* the Lord chuseth, shews forth themselves, being ready and willing to *relieve the oppressed, to take off the heavy Burthens, &c.* as before expressed: And to and among such the *Light* is risen out of obscurity, and the *Darkness* is become as Noon-day, and the Lord guides such continually, and satisfies their Souls in drought, and their Bones are made fat, and are like the watered Garden, and like a Spring whose Water never fails. These, and many more Blessings were promised to such as kept the *Fast* which God chuseth; And a remnant that are come to the keeping of it, are living Witnesses that he is faithful that promised, and hath fulfilled the same, and can praise the Lord in the sense and enjoyment thereof, though there be many sorts of Fasters in *Christendom*, that know nothing experimentally of the fulfillings of these and many other precious Promises, because their *Fasts* have not been of God's chusing or appointing,  
but



but of their own; so the fruit and effect hath been strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness, though under a solemn Form of afflicting their Souls for a day, bowing down their heads, cloathing themselves in Sack-cloth, and, it may be, cutting their Flesh with Whips too, accompanied with abundance of other Acts voluntary humility, which finds no acceptance with God, but is spread as Dung upon their Faces, being not the *Fast*, neither for matter nor manner which he delights in. And this is found true by woful experience, throughout whole *Christendome*, whose Fruits and evil Conversation one towards another, may compare with any Nation under Heaven, whereby the name of Christ and Christianity (or the Christian Religion) is become odious to *Jews*, *Turks* and Infidels: And a remnant that are Christians indeed, and are keeping a *Fast* to God, are grieved to hear a great noise of holy Church, holy Fathers, holy Scriptures, holy Traditions, holy Orders, holy Bread, holy Wine, holy Water, holy Vestments and holy Places, while all lies in pollution, while all unholiness abounds, especially among men pretending to holy Orders, who think they do good service to Plot and Contrive the Ruine and Destruction of mens Lives who cannot believe their Church to be holy as they say: This *Cainish* murderous Spirit is not only contrary to true Christianity, but also inconsistent with humane Society, and the well-being of mankind; This is so great a Beast of

Prey,

Prey, that it is not safe in these Protestant Countries to suffer his Horns to grow strong, much less to have Crowns upon them ; one great end of Magestery being to take care that one man prey not upon another, And nothing proves more ravenous, cruel and unnatural, than what is bred and generated, through a false opinion of Religion, the ground indeed of many Massacres, and much Bloudshed in *Christendom*.

Now in as much as God by his immediate hand of Power stirring in the Hearts and Consciences of wicked men (who were Instruments in, and privy to the late *Bloudy, Popish, Religious Plot*) hath so wrought, as to bring them to make some Discovery of the same, whereby the Pit and Snare they have digged and laid, by Council from the depth of Hell, is in some measure discovered, if not clearly seen. This all true Christians cannot but acknowledge to be the mighty merciful hand of Almighty God to the Inhabitants of this Island in particular, and to all tender-hearted well-meaning Protestants in *Europe*, for which great Mercy it is their bounden Duty to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, who hath discovered the Danger, discovered the Pit and Snare (and brought to light the hidden things of darkness) that they may witness a safe and full Deliverance therefrom.

Now it is not enough to appoint a day for a *Fast*, and to make a Book of *Prayers* to be read on that day, and to hear a few studied Sermons,

mens, &c: this is not that which God regards, but every particular is to breath and cry mightily unto God, and every one is to turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands; this is that which God took special notice of, and had only regard unto in the Fast of the King and the Citizens

of that great City *Niniveh*. It's said God *saw their Works, and that they turned from their evil ways*. This is the principle part of the Fast that God takes notice of, where this is wanting, all other circumstances as hath been hinted before avails nothing; this alone turns away the wrath and anger of God from a person or people, from a City or Kingdom, even by turning every one from his evil way, which is no less than a forsaking the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this World, and all

there be not a turning every one from the evil of his way. This is the word of truth to all whom it may concern.

These were neither *Jews* nor *Israelites*, neither had they the Law of God by *Moses* given to them, yet God had more regard to their Fast, then to the Fasts of the *Jews*, who, notwithstanding their frequent formal Fastings, continued doing evil; and these *Assyrians*, *Gentiles*, or *Heathens*, turning every one from the evil of his way, found favour and acceptance in the sight of God, this clearly shews that the just God is no respecter of persons but in every Nation those that fear him, and work Righteousness shall be accepted, and the contrary rejected; let them profess as they will, and talk of being within the Pale of the Church, and of the Apostolical Faith, and in holy Orders, and Administrators, and Partakers of holy Ordinances, &c. all this talk is vain and frivolous, if

*the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments;* This is the Duty of every Christian, and all that are found therein are keeping a *Fast* to God. Let all strive to exceed each other herein, though of different Names, in different Forms, Disciplines, Ceremonies and Circumstances, let all see that his heart is sincere to God, and that he stands approved in what he doth in the eye of the Lord, which runs to and fro through the Earth, and beholds the Evil and the Good, which eye is nigh unto all men, and sees the things done in secret, and causeth them to be preached upon the House-top. Now this pure eye of God (or Light) in men, cannot behold Iniquity (so as to approve of it) but condemns it, (if it be brought to it, as he that loveth it doth,) and all those that are found working of it; let their Name, Nation, Opinion, Profession, Form or Fashion of Worship be what it will; *He that doth evil hates the Light*, and Sin lies at his door, and his foolish heart is darkened and hardened, for doing of evil doth both. And he that hath a hard heart, and regards Iniquity, he hath no Sacrifice to offer acceptable to God, neither will he hear their *Prayers*, nor regard their *Fasts*, nor their solemn *Assemblies*; so it concerns all to examine how they stand in the sight of God, for God cannot be mocked, he sees the inside of all mens hearts, and their secret intents and purposes are not hid from him. Blessed are all that walk upright in his sight, according to the measure

measure of knowledge and understanding he hath given to them, such alone are in the way to receive more and more of his Mercies, Blessings, Riches and Fulness, until their souls are fully satisfied therewith: Which that all may come to enjoy, is the breathing desires of him who hath good will to all men. *W. Shewen.*

## P Q S T S C R I P T.

**I**N order to keep the Fast which God requires, let all people beware of that Doctrine that is taught and believed by divers Sects in Christendom, *viz. That it is impossible to live without sin, or to abstain from eating the forbidden fruit, while on this side the grave.* Such Teachers and Believers are under a strong delusion, believing a Lye, the high way to damnation; for mankind had a being in this visible world, before sin was, and the best life he ever lived, was without sin; when he began to sin, to break Gods command, to eat forbidden fruit, then began his Misery, and as Sin increased, his Misery increased, as it doth upon all men at this day.

Now God in his universal love and pity towards mankind, did, and hath ordained means of Restoration, Renovation and perfect Redemption, from and out of that which was and is the cause of all the misery and sorrow that doth and hath attended mankind from the beginning of the world to this day, *viz. Sin:* And this means is Christ Jesus the Son of th  
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living God, in whom is Life, and the Life is Light of men ; which is sufficient to lead all that love it, and receive him, out of sin, into a sinless state again, into paradise again, into the favour of God again ; which Christ is the power and wisdom of God, able to destroy the Devil and his works ; and to make an end of sin, which the Devil and the first Adam began ; and to save his people, not only from the punishment of sin, but from the committing of it also : This is the Gospel of glad tidings to all that are weary and heavy laden, and feel the weight and burthen of sin, and the loathsomeness and stink of the dead body of it : And they are the only Ministers of God and Christ that preach this Gospel to mankind ; and the other are the quite contrary , let their pretence be what it will, such never comes themselves, nor brings others to keep the Fast which God delights in.

Now those that are come to the keeping this Fast, and are restored by Christ Jesus into the heavenly Image man bore before he broke it, may be tempted as Adam was, and drawn into sin after the similitude of Adams Transgression, if they stand not in awe and dread of the Mystery and Power of God, who commanded to forbear to eat, and gave, and gives wisdom and power so do : And take Christ Jesus the second Adam for their living and heavenly example ; who when he was tempted in his great Fast, which he kept to God his Father, he did not Eat, though  
tempted



tempted to Eat, beyond what the first Adam was, yet did not so much as hunger in the time of it; but when the time of tempration was over, and the Devil made to flee, he then hungred, and Angels came and ministred unto him. This second Adam is to be followed by every true Christian, and the first Adam what he did in breaking the Fast, in obeying the tempter, may serve as a warning, least doing the like, the same reward of punishment follow.

Oh that all Kings, Princes, Parliaments, Magistrates and People in Christendom, would consider, know and understand, that the pure Christian Religion doth not teach, allow nor admit that any mans Estate, Liberty, Person or Life, ought to be ruined, tortured or destroyed, because they do not receive, believe nor understand the same. No man can make or force his Brother or Neighbour to be a true Christian; he that is not so, hath and will have punishment sufficient: It's enough for *Cesar* (or the Civil Magistrate) to mind the things of his kingdom, and to watch over those whose Opinions and Principles leads them into Plots and Conspiracies, Massacres and Rebellions, and all sorts of Violence, under the notion of advancing the kingdom of Christ, his Church and Ordinances, and the holy Catholick Religion: Even these (let their name be as it will) he that rules for God and the good of men, ought to have an eye and care that they may not have power and opportunity to execute the same.

**T H E E N D.**